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WESTERN BENEFITS THROUGH CHINA'S DEVELOPMENT

Dear Sir:

This article from the pen of our Consul-General, Mr. Ho Yow, reaches so profoundly into the springs from which the trade between the United States and China must arise, and so ably sets forth the conditions upon which that commerce must grow, that we have taken the liberty of reproducing it from "The Forum" in which it first appeared, and of sending it to you in this form. We request you to read it and express the belief that, after reading it, your views will be benefited as to the possible value of Chinese commerce to the United States.

Very respectfully,

CHIN SIC CHOW,
President Chinese Six Companies,
San Francisco.

Wong Chung,
Secretary.

WESTERN BENEFITS THROUGH CHINA'S DEVELOPMENT

BY HO YOW,
IMPERIAL CHINESE CONSUL-GENERAL

Ho, Yo

(Reprinted from THE FORUM of March, 1900.)

In the mind of every man who reads his article, China must hereafter stand for something higher and better than before.

Portland Oregonian.

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Western Benefits Through China's Development

By HO YOW

Imperial Chinese Consul-General to the United States.

The leavening of the vast Chinese Empire, begun within the past quarter of a century, by Western thought, is now strongly felt throughout the realm. Under the fostering influence of a wise and progressive government, it is effecting in a nation of over 400,000,000 souls marvellously beneficent changes. These have been watched by the peoples of the West with the utmost gratification, and with the liveliest anticipation and hope.

He must be a curious man of the West who does not feel a certain pride in the fact that the creations of his half of the world have begun to enter the thought realm of what is practically the remainder of the earth, and to effect methods, to establish modes, even to subvert forms in a region which for many centuries esteemed itself, and was in truth, the supreme of the Universe. There is an element of sympathy in human nature which feels gratification in the advancement of a fellow-being, and contemplates with admiration and applause his rise to higher things.

It is not altogether consepts and precepts that move the numerous followers of your Christian faiths to establish schools, asylums, and hospitals, to usher the young into a flowering maturity, and to nurse the sick to health. There is an instinct, as natural to mankind as the instinct of self-preservation, which makes for the promotion of others in the scale of being; and this instinct, operating on a plane as wide as the human nature of which it is a part, takes no account of race lines or color limits. Your missionary conceives that his doctrines will secure happiness to the soul after death: straightway he traverses cities and plains and jungles in search of all men not in accord with his views, be they pale, black, yellow, or red. But this most noble quality, like every other benevolent trait of our natures, may, in individual instances be perverted. Where there were heartiness, helpfulness, and generosity there may come narrowness and selfishness; and, unfortunate as the fact may be, these faults, which we are

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inclined to pity in people, who, from pinched, material conditions, regard with envy their more successful brothers, may exist in those who have not the excuse of material pressure, but who evolve their views from philosophy.

It is false philosophy, however, that leads to such conclusions; for any reasoning which results in pitting man against man in just as wrong as the notion in chemistry which once designated filth as waste matter. We have since learned that filth is but matter out of place, that, in the harmony of nature, there is no such thing as waste. In the realm of human brotherhood similar harmonies exist; as if any line of thought concludes with a postulate that the prosperity and advancement of one people are irreconcilable with the prosperity and advancement of another people, that the living of one body of the race upon a plane of high ideals can be maintained only through the degradation of another body of the race, or through the continuance of it upon a level distinctly inferior, that line of thought, depend upon it, is wrong and mischievous.

It is to me a most painful circumstance that this idea of the success of one nation being dependent upon the non-success of another nation, and hence of the world, should be so widely diffused in the United States; and it is remarkable, too, that it should be diffused not only in the teeth of philosophy, but in the very presence of facts incessantly proclaiming to the contrary. It is a school of thought which, I am glad to say, England has survived, and which, it is comforting to note, the United States, under the sagacious administration now existing at Washington, is rapidly putting aside through the avenue of reciprocity treaties.

Nevertheless, there are those who, in all seriousness, maintain, with specious arguments, that the development of one nation must operate to the harm of the nations with which it trades if trade be left open between them. The most striking instance which I have lately observed of the assertion of this fallacy elaborated with wrongly drawn deductions, is the article by Mr. John P. Young, in *The Forum* for November, 1899. It is more notable to me since the nation against which it is aimed is China. Mr. Young is the first man who, to my knowledge, has specifically declared in public print that the industrial development now progressing in China will result detrimentally to the welfare of the United States. If this voice had come from New York I might have thought that it was moved by rivalry on the part of the Eastern metropolis caused by the impending greatness of the chief seaport of the Pacific coast, fronting, as San Francisco does, the very face of China. But when it is considered that Mr. Young is a resident of San Francisco and managing editor of one of the largest newspapers on the coast, a

newspaper which makes it its especial province to foster the industrial growth of the city and State, his error becomes all the more perplexing.

Mr. Young takes the curious position that the development of China, which would mean her rise in the production of those things esteemed by Westerners, would be a menace, and a possible blight, to Western industry. It is singular that any American should be found who asserts that American industry stands upon so unstable a basis. If the assertion were true, the country would have good reason to fear, and would urgently need to post geese on the Capitol to quack out in the night at the approach of an invader. Any civilization built upon such sands would surely be swept away; and the day of its downfall could never be far from the date of its rise. Mr. Young feels that the vast natural resources of China, together with her myriads of population, among whom the laborers are willing to work for a mere pittance per day, when acted upon by the methods in Western use will result in producing so cheaply that the producers of the United States will be unable to compete with such products in their own market. The result will be, Mr. Young thinks, not only to drive American salesmen out of China, but to a large degree to close American mills, and to convert their salesmen into purveyors of Chinese wares. The picture is exceedingly dark. Here we have China's import trade entirely eliminated, and an immence export trade developed, by which China is inundating the United States with the things her people want, and taking nothing in return.

Mr. Young would say, however, that China would demand gold for her goods, and, in this way, would drain the country of gold. But China does not want gold; almost every pennyweight mined within her territory being sent abroad. Gold is not currency with her; it is a commodity no more specialized or valued than cloth or grain—indeed, not so much. China's standard is silver, and silver you do not want. Seven out of every ten of your silver mines are today lying idle. The people of the States in which the mines are located have recently been waging a vigorous campaign to open the mints of the country to the coinage of silver, in order that a market for their commodity may be created. Now here, according to Mr. Young, is China, which will be willing to take their silver and to give goods in their return. Consequently, in any event, if Chinese competition should close the cotton mills of Massachusetts, the iron mills of Pennsylvania, the tanneries of Chicago, the furniture factories of Michigan, and so on throughout the whole gamut of American enterprise, it would at least open the silver mines of Utah, Nevada, and Montana, and make populous and powerful those now neglected States.

Meanwhile, it must be remembered that China has immense resources of silver of her own. The mountains which flank the Great Desert of Gobi, the Tsin-lings, the Pelings, the Nan-lings, all contain great deposits of silver; the mountains of Yun-nan being particularly rich in it. When the concessionaires to whom China has granted the privilege of digging and reducing much of this ore shall, by modern methods, have completed their tasks, then as much silver as all the needs of art or trade require shall be left loose over the Empire; and small call may be made upon foreign commerce for the money metal. If in the eyes of Mr. Young such a calamity takes place, and if, as he assumes, China still persists in sending to the United States her goods, why then, manufacturing everything cheaper than like articles are made here, there could, of course, be nothing taken in return; and the United States would be deluged in clean gift with infinite quantities of superior Chinese goods to the closing of all her mills and to the utter idleness of her people. Imagine such a state! Every person in possession of all he could desire to eat, drink, and wear, all of Chinese production, for which nothing could be taken in return because of your cost of manufacture, and withal, lolling in enforced and complete indolence! Surely the possibilities of such a catastrophe might alarm any one. To avert such a misfortune the pens of such publicists as Mr. Young might well be engaged.

Mr. Young gives reasons of inclining to the opinion that the Chinese will take nothing in return for what they send. The chief reason is, that the Chinese want nothing. He tells us that "for nearly half a century Europeans and Americans have had very few obstructions placed in the way of introducing their wares to the attention of the millions living in and near the treaty ports; and in that time they have not succeeded in securing as great a market for their surplus of manufactured products as that created in half the time in spasely populated Argentina." He tells us, too, that, in California, "such a thing as Europeans and Americans manufacturing for Chinese consumption is never thought of; and if the idea ever did occur, it would be speedily abandoned; because if the article were one which this really curious people wanted, they would turn to and make it themselves." And then he remarks that "the workers of Europe and the United States may not take kindly to the prospect of China's vast stores of mineral wealth being converted by Chinese into finished articles for consumption in the Western World." Mr. Young says furthermore:

"It is probable that, in the earlier stages of modern industrial development, the vast surplus energy of the Empire will be utilized in manufacturing for outsiders rather than for Chinese. The latter, until they radically change their habits of living, until they learn to consume wastefully, must necessarily be poor customers for the

wares which they may produce in profusion." So he concludes that "it may be safely predicted that the effect of the opening of China to the trade of the world will not be followed by results so confidently expected by people who have surplus products that they are anxious to dispose of at a profit. Instead, the effect of the opening and awakening will probably be to bring disaster upon Western industrialism unless a barrier be interposed to the competition of a race whose most striking characteristic is an entire absence of those desires and aspirations which Americans and Europeans strive to gratify. This notable peculiarity, at this stage of the world's development, may give the Chinese an overwhelming advantage in the struggle for existence, and compel the Western working classes to abandon their ideals."

So it is plain that the Chinese will persist in sending without taking, and that they will not take because they do not want. They do not want because traits, the "result of an intense struggle for existence extending through thousands of years," have trained them to the utmost parsimony in living. Their houses are of "a uniform low level and monotonous appearance, the interiors being as uniform as the exteriors. The meager furnishing and extreme plainness which mark nearly all interiors are due to a national trait, and are not enforced by lack of things with which to make home beautiful." In communities like the Chinese, he says, "the only incentive to accumulation is a mere desire for subsistence which takes the form of providing for a rainy day. The desire for reputability, which is responsible for the system of conspicuous waste that marks the expenditures of all highly civilized Western peoples, and is accountable for the chief part of the consumption of the manufactured goods in the Western world, is almost unknown in China; and it is doubtful whether such a struggle could be incited in that country."

But, not only in his house, we are informed, are the Chinese content to dispense with luxuries, but in the matter of dress the utmost uniformity prevails. Fashion, that incentive to incessant change and unending waste in clothes, is not known among us; hence, he argues, much less material would be consumed by us than is consumed by Western peoples. Consequently, on the whole, there would be no demand by the Chinese for Western goods; while the cargoes of utilities which we would deliver upon these shores could only be warded off by high and hostile tariffs, for the enact. ment and levying of which, Mr. Young's article is especially framed- The absurdity of the statements of Mr. Young and of his deductions is so palpable that ordinarily I would not bother to reply to them. But it is an unhappy fact that his views are shared by others. I have said that he has been the first to publish them. He seems

to have taken his cue, however, from what he calls a "warning note" sounded by "Bradstreet's Trade Review;" reciting that "some day China will figure as a competitor in many lines of industries in the markets of the world." This competition is what these champions of monopoly fear.

They are champions of monopoly, though they may not know it. What afflicts them is the unfortunate perversion of ideas which has arisen in the United States through a trade system created by legislative acts in opposition to the natural trend, and which is built upon the error that foreign trade means an exchange of goods for gold. If, therefore, you can have vast quantities of goods going out of your country, and great amounts of gold coming in, then you have the acme of what you call "national prosperity." The very statement looked at as a cold formula is ridiculous. Suppose this sort of thing possible. Suppose that in the range of the Tsin-lings we should find a mountain of pure gold, and we should send this stuff to you by shipload, as we probably should in exchange for your goods. What would be the result? Why, very shortly gold would become so plentiful in your country that its purchasing power would not equal the cost of digging it from the mountain and transporting it, slight as might be that cost in cheap labor in China. As a consequence, your one-sided foreign trade would be shut off entirely, snuffed out by the very process upon which, in lack of wisdom, you wish to base your foreign trade, and which such disputants as Mr. Young are alert to defend. Nay, this mountain of gold idea may not be altogether allegorical. Our alchemists have always held that gold is a compound; a view now finding sanction among the metallurgists of the United States. It may be that we who discovered gunpowder and the fact that the magnet inclines to the pole shall yet discover the reaction which produces gold. When we do you shall have gold to your heart's content; but, as a result, you will find how quickly you will correct your notion that foreign trade consists of an exchange of goods for gold.

You will then learn the great and universal truth that trade is barter, an exchange of goods for goods. You will learn, too, this potent and sadly overlooked fact, that the more goods that come into a nation the more goods must go out to pay for them. Consequently, that heavy imports are much to be desired; and all limits and restrictions upon them which impair their free ingress should be as far as possible swept aside; for, as the night follows the day, heavy imports nto your country must be followed by heavy exports.

Mr. Young does us Chinese a keen injustice by his inference that we would send any goods without demanding a full and adequate return; and he is entirely wrong when he supposes that we want

nothing that you have. On the contrary, the Chinese want a vast number of things. No people have desires pitched higher; no people are more eager to advance. What does Mr. Young suppose to be the incentive which forces the lowest born coolie to strive in salt mines or to pack burdens day by day over long and tedious roads, if it is not that he desires to better himself? Wherever the Chinese have gone they have become distinguished, not alone for industry but also for the wealth which attends it. Where the Chinese have settled, in all of those kingdoms and communities adjacent to China, they are foremost among the men of wealth and influence. In Corea, the Straits Settlements, and the Philippines they have long constituted the very backbone of commerce and finance.

It is wrong, too, to say that the Chinese do not desire or enjoy luxuries. Mr. Young does not understand us. Our ideas of those things are different from his, but they are none the less expensive. He thinks that because we do not wear starched linen and silk hats, and because our women do not wear lingerie, we consume little. But the gentleman is mistaken. The garb of the ordinary Chinese about equals in cost that of the Americans. Your negroes working in the rice fields of the South are scarcely better clad than our coolies in similar occupations. Among the upper classes your dress does not compare in cost with ours. If your gentleman of leisure pays $100 for a suit of clothes his habit may be considered expensive: with us the very embroidery on the breast-piece of the jacket frequently costs more. Mr. Young must not think that because we do not follow Western styles we have no luxurious tastes. There is nothing in Western styles to tempt us. I have myself donned the European garb on several occasions, and I have always found it stiff, tight and awkward. It encases the body with an inconvenience which would be intolerable if the wearer knew better.

Mr. Young must not forget that progress in China does not mean our forsaking national habits in such things as clothes and modes of life. In a thousand things we do not bow to the West. Your effects may be different from ours; but they are not superior. We were a civilization more powerful than Rome at her best, in a day when the hills of Rome were pasture, and when the only peoples of the wilderness which is now your land were savages. You cannot expect forms which the wisdom of thousands of years has confirmed to be swept away because you have another fashion. Mr. Chester Holcomb, who was for years a member of the United States Legation at Peking, speaking of our poorer classes in his work, "The Real Chinaman," p. 311, says: "The Chinese do not live poorly because they desire nothing better. Like all other men they live as well as their earnings or resources will allow. A wealthy Chinaman dresses as expensively,

though in a different style, has a table as luxurious, though his taste may be esteemed peculiar, and generally maintains the same elegance as his Western brother. There, as everywhere else, income must control the expense."*

But the fact that Chinese have their own ideals and models does not mean that there is nothing used in Western life that they want. They want, as I have said, thousands of things you have. It is not anticipating too much to opine that the modern American house, with its conveniences and comforts, will be the future house of China. Her cities will be sewered and paved, lighted with electric lamps and threaded with electric car lines. They will have water works and fire departments and spacious public edifices. The materials for many of these things must come from the West. But Mr. Young must not forget that before we can procure these things we must first have something to buy them with; and the only things with which we or any other people have to buy are the products of our labor. If, then, our products are of slight value, reckoned upon the unit of population, our exchanges must be correspondingly small, and our trade must be worth little.

This must always be the case so long as China produces by hand labor and not by machines. What is a machine in relation to labor? It is a multiplication of the power of the hand that runs it. A cobbler will make one pair of shoes in two days. Give him a machine and the skill to run it, and he will make twenty pairs of shoes in the same time. What is this but a multiform increase of the potentiality of his hand. With his bare hands and his tools he had one pair of shoes at the end of two days with which to buy food, clothes and furniture; with his machine he has twenty pairs, less cost of materials, to devote to the same end. Chinese labor is cheap, but only because its effectiveness is small. Let this be magnified with the power of machines, and it will be dear enough. Chinamen will be prompt to demand their full share of the wealth which their hands produce after they have been potentialized by the machine, just as Mr. Young correctly

*In John Thompson's book, "Through China with a Camera," there is on page 258 the following description of a Chinese gentleman of today and his house: "Mr. Yang was a fair sample of the modern Chinese savant—fat, good-natured and contented. His house, like most others in China was approached through a lane hedged in by high brick walls on either side, so that there was nothing to be seen of it from without save the small doorway and the small brick partition about six feet beyond the threshold. Within there was the usual array of courts and halls, reached by narrow vine-shaded corridors; but each court was tastefully laid out with rockeries, flowers, fish ponds, and pavilions. Really, the place was very picturesque and admirably suited to the disposition of a people affecting seclusion and the pleasures of family life. Its proprietor was an amateur, not only of photography, but of chemistry and electricity, too; and he had a laboratory fitted up in the ladies' quarter. In one corner of this laboratory stood a black carved bedstead, curtained with silk and pillowed with wood; while a carved bench also of black wood, supported a heterogeneous collection of instruments, chemical, electric and photographic, besides Chinese and European books. The walls were garnished with enlarged photographs of Yang's family and friends. In a small outer court there was a steam saw mill, with which the owner had achieved wonders."

remarks that, as toilers in the West, they have come to "enjoy better wages than most of the purely laboring classes of the Western world."

Mr. Young, in common with his school, overlooks a salient fact. He concludes that the demand for labor arises from a scarcity of labor's products. Hence, if abundance comes into a nation from abroad, there are consequent congestion and idleness within. It is doubtless this mistake that causes Mr. Young to fear the onslaught of goods which, he argues, will come from China into the United States in free gift and without value exacted in return. The idea of there not being "enough work to go round" was the idea of ancient China, just as it is the present idea of Mr. Young's school. It was this that tabooed machines "because they produce so much that there would be nothing left to do;" consequently, dearth was cherished as a national necessity. But such modern statesmen as Prince Ching, Yung Lu, Li Hung Chang, and Wu Ting-fang have perceived differently. With a vision unaffected by interests other than truth, they discern that the greatness of the West exists because of its machines and that, as the effect of the machine is to multiply produce, so the produce thus created in turn calls upon other mechanisms and other labor.

The starched linen of which Mr. Young speaks would not exist if you would not produce more corn and potatoes than you require for food. Take away your steam ploughs, cultivators, diggers, and shellers, and if any one wears starched linen some one will have to go hungry to allow it. It is the presence of wealth that creates a demand for wealth. The human mind is so adjusted that as soon at it is gratified it begins to evolve visions of further desires. Demand breeds upon what it feeds; it can never be surfeited. Take your Indian out of his canvas tepee and build him a house, he will forthwith want it furnished; put carpet on his parlor floor, and he will crave a piano; give him china dishes, he will abolish jerked beef and require *ragouts*. This quality is an instinct of nature and exists in all peoples, including the sensitive, alert, calculating, and eager Chinaman.

It is not we who are the adherents of uniformity; it is Mr. Young and his class. Through the installation of monopoly, which seeks to control certain lines of production within the country, Mr. Young would have a crystallized condition that nothing could disturb; and you would go on purchasing the products of your combine which, secure and absolute in its market, would have no need to regard the world's progress in its utility, and would continue indefinitely to supply you with whatever it might please. We, on the other hand, seeking a market for our like product, would be constantly watchful to cheapen its cost and to increase its merit. Left to itself the world of production is constantly changing, constantly working toward higher

planes; being unceasingly drawn into accord with the higher reaches of human thought. It is only when its action is obstructed by such "barriers interposed to competition" as Mr. Young asks for, that it subsides into static quiescence. Left to itself it will follow man in all his ideals; interfered with by "barriers" it becomes paralyzed.

After all, what are utilities, or these things we call "goods," which we import an export? They are no other than expressions of human thought impressed upon matter. Looking to your imports and not beyond them, from which countries do you get evidences of the highest civilization—from Europe or from Africa, from England or from Turkey? You do not have to look beyond what a people puts forth to fix its position in the scale of being. In truth, by such alone may they be judged; for goods are acts; and, as men or nations act, so are they high or low in the domain of thought. The reason why China is behind the United States in material achievements is, that our masses, as compared with yours, have little potential thought. Our government understands this. It is our effort now to acquire for our people a measure of your knowledge, for that means ascension over nature; and a people is great and powerful just in the degree that it possesses the ability to turn nature in all her departments to the gratification of human desires.

But, aside from these abstractions, we have only to look about us to find refutation of the hypothesis and fear of Mr. Young that "the Western world will not be benefited by Chinese development." A few years ago, when our neighbor Japan—a much smaller nation than our own, and, therefore, more sensitive to Western influences—manifested signs of the revival which has since so distinguished it, Mr. Young attacked that kingdom just as he is now assailing us. He had then the same fears that the United States would be swamped by the goods of Japan, just as he now expresses fear that it will be deluged with the products of China. If his doctrines had been believed they would have driven Japanese trade away from San Francisco through the erection of those "interposing barriers" which he so much desires to be built against China with the result that there would have been lost to the city and country about $15,000,000 of sales to Japan a year. But his alarms were not heeded; and the trade with Japan increased, because, by the introduction and use of machines, the country, which produces little or no gold, came to have something to buy with. In 1898, it bought 40,000,000 yen worth from this country, though only four years before it could buy but 6,000,000 yen worth. In 1898, you took from them 47,000,000 yen worth of goods; so that you have shown a disposition to increase your purchases just as they have increased their imports from you.

If Mr. Young's conclusion, that the development of one nation is

harmful to the condition of another nation, were correct, you would naturally expect to find the part of the United States nearest the developing nations showing the worst effects of the blight. What part of your country has the most industry, business, finance, development, the side that fronts Europe, or the side that faces quiescent and undeveloped Asia? If you could put the United States on a turntable and twist it around until the Golden Gate opposed the English Channel and New York was before Hong Kong, would San Francisco be benefited or damaged by its contiguity to Europe? Would New York benefit China or would China sink back from her rising evolution? Obviously, Mr. Young's theories are thin indeed; he has against him the proved experiment of unfolded Europe. Since 1888 England has advanced prodigiously. You are now taking from her vastly more than you took then; yet, in 1888 you sold to her but $32,000,000 worth, while in 1898 this amount was increased to $74,000,000. Germany has kept full pace with Europe's advance, a fact made manifest in the great increace of her exports to the United States. Yet in 1878 you sold her $16,500,000, and in 1898, $32,700,000. England and Germany and France and Italy have increased in their power to buy from you; and the size of their purchase bills has promptly manifested this enlargement of their ability. Their power to purchase, however, is not the power to send gold, which would be all drained out of their countries in one year's buying, but the power to send to you the things which your civilization desires.

So will it be with China. The trade which now only amounts to some thirty-two millions both ways is so small because of China's inability to make larger purchases. When we multiply the things you want, that same variation will excite in us a desire for the things you have. If our goods are cheap, so much the better for you. We thereby bring you more of labor than you return to us. The teamster gives to the lawyer the product of thirty days' toil for an hour of the lawyer's thought. Both are benefited; but, in the aspect of things, who acquires the higher advantage from the transaction? We may give you abundance of our goods for little of your goods; but you will be the more favored.

Mr. Young takes a narrow view when he measures the possibilities of the Chinese Empire by the little group of people in San Francisco's Chinatown. They consume little of American wares, it is true; for few expect to remain here permanently. Most of them look foward to the time when, gathering their accumulated stores, they can return to China. This is caused by two considerations: (1) the hostile feeling that exists against the Chinese here, due to the agitations of labor leaders and political charlatans; and (2) the obstructive legislation influenced thereby, with the result that their freedom is curtailed

and their peace and property are made insecure. Moreover, the difference in the purchasing power of their money here and in China impels them to aspire to live in the country where their wealth will give them more return. All of these conditions will undoubtedly cease to exist.

I do not believe that the American people will always be deluded as to the value and necessity of Chinese residents, or that the types of men who now influence thought on that subject will continue to find credence; and I am very sure that, in not many years, the Chinaman's money earned in the United States will buy but little more in China than here. For, the cost of living will rise with the rate of wages; and in China both will presently reach the American standard. I do not expect this change to take place slowly. The movement now progressing in China has attained marvellous speed; and, with the aid of the kindly offices of the Western peoples, especially the people of the United States, and under the guidance of the present sagacious and efficient government of China, we shall continue our progress, advancing ever upward, making ourselves more and more fitted to be a benefit to the world and to merit the highest esteem in the family of nations.

Personal reference to Mr. Ho Yow by the editor of the *Forum.*

"Mr. Ho Yow, Chinese Consul-General to the United States, was born in Hong Kong, in 1869. Graduated in 1885 at the Incorporated Law College of London, with the degree of Solicitor in Chancery. Some years ago, came to the United States, and was for one year secretary to His Excellency Wu Ting-fang, Chinese Minister at Washington. Left that post to accept the vice-consulateship in San Francisco, where he was sent to settle a dispute which had arisen between the See Yups and the Sam Yups, rival Chinese clans in California. The successful solution of that difficulty and the restoration of order procured for him promotion to the Consul-Generalship, which office he has since held, having been Vice-Consul one year and Consul-General two years. The Consul Generalship of the United States is the most important office in the consular service of China, and Mr. Ho Yow is the youngest man in that service. His great effort has been to give to the people of the United States a correct understanding of China, its government and people, as well as to expand the trade relations between the two countries."

Comments of the Press.

Owing to the number and length of the newspaper comments which have been made upon the foregoing article it would be impossible within the limits of these pages to notice all, or to give in full the few that are noticed; excerpts, from the following, however, are selected:

A LIGHT FROM ASIA.

There is a most remarkable article in *The Forum* for March that should be read by every thinking man in America. It is from the pen of Ho Yow, Chinese Consul-General to the United States, and it puts before the world a specimen of high economic thinking that puts to shame the tawdry compositions generally produced upon economics. There are eternal principles of human development written in this Chinaman's essay, which are an undiscovered country to half the members of our Congress, and unfamiliar to the pages of our magazines and politics. The article as a whole is a fit introduction to the study of the practical, political economy that awaits the Americans of the Twentieth Century.

The Consul-General is answering a recent argument made in *The Forum* by Mr. John P. Young of San Francisco, who sought to establish that China's development bodes ill to the United States, because the Chinese will undersell us as competitors and fail of increasing demands as buyers. Mr. Young's misconceptions have been abundantly refuted, but by none so admirably as by this gifted Chinaman. He takes up the errors, one by one, and puts them alongside the ascertained truth of experience in a way that leaves them without a shadow of support or excuse among thinking men.

We have countless statesmen and scholars in the United States who could, with profit, be sent to school to this sagacious Chinaman. In the mind of every man who reads his article the name of China must stand for something higher and better than before. We are getting familiar these days with the evils that flow from the pernicious activity of the half educated. They muddle our finances, they distort and encumber our trade, they block out the pathway to a high place among the nations. But it is little short of humiliating to receive a lesson in liberality and clear thinking from a representative of the very people whom we aspire to teach and elevate.—*Portland Oregonian.*

LIGHT FROM THE ORIENT.

The Chinese Minister recently made some very pointed observations at a public dinner in New York, and at the dedication of the Law School building in Philadelphia he not only exposed some of our inconsistencies with refined sarcasm, but clearly carried off the palm of oratory from our speakers. And now comes the *Chinese Consul General* with an article in the March number of *The Forum*, in which he elucidates the protectionist theory of foreign trade with a logic which would be cruel but for its delicate humor.

Mr. Ho Yow, not without guile, entitles his article, "Western Benefits Through China's Development." That is the proper way to attract the hard-headed men of business who take a practical view of our mission in the East and mean, as Mr. Grosvenor of Ohio says, to make all the money they can out of expansion. "What is there in it for us?" is their cry, and when the Consul-General of China begins to talk of "Western benefits" they naturally prick up their ears. But as he proceeds to unfold the conditions on which these benefits are to be obtained, the agreeable anticipations of these readers will be painfully dispelled. Such benefits

are not to be had for nothing, our Chinese adviser assures us, and if we are to enlarge our exports to China, we can do so only by allowing the Chinese to enlarge their exports to this country.

With these and even more forcible arguments, the Chinese Consul-General "wipes the floor" with the unfortunate Mr. Young, and in view of the audacity of his proceeding, it is pertinent to ask whether the Chinese Exclusion Act should not be extended so as to keep out laborers in the field of oratory and literature. When American audiences desert the hall while eminent citizens are holding forth, and throng it with delighted enthusiasm and applause when the Chinese Minister opens his mouth, and when prominent editors are held up to the derision of all reasoning mankind in the pages of our magazines, it is time for sincere protectionists to protest. Perhaps the wily Oriental may find that his specious plea for the free admission of the products of his country has undone his cause; for if our leading editors find themselves excelled by Chinese writers, protection will be demanded by our press with a zeal hitherto unparalleled.—*New York Post.*

HO YOW ON "DEVELOPING CHINA."

One of the noteworthy evidences that China is coming out of her shell is the greater readiness with which her representative men in other lands frankly express their opinions on current topics of interest whether they concern Cathay or more "modern" nations. Of course, this is another indication that the men of affairs in that ancient empire are beginning to wake up and to realize that not alone the world of the distant past concerns their country, but the world of the present, and above all, the world of the future.

The inquisitive questions and bright comments made by Li Hung Chang during his late visit to this country have not been forgotten. It is realized that they came from a real thinker, however different his "point of view" might be from that of the average American.

Since Li's visit, the diplomatic and consular representatives of China in this country have manifested a willingness to express themselves fully, here and in England, on various topics, with a frankness and freedom which are pleasantly notable. The Chinese minister at Washington has made more than one notable address of late.

And now Ho Yow, Chinese Consul-General to the United States, deals in the March *Forum* with the suggestive topic, "Western Benefits Through Chinese Development." He begins his article by acknowledging that the leavening of the vast Chinese Empire, begun within the past quarter of a century, by Western thought, is now strongly felt throughout the realm. Under the fostering influence of a wise and progressive government, it is effecting in a nation of over 400,000,000 souls marvelously beneficent changes. That the development of China can possibly operate to the harm of the nations with which it trades, if trade be left open between them, Ho Yow strenuously denies.—*Boston Globe.*

THE BUGBEAR OF ORIENTAL COMPETITION.

American working men who see peril to their interests in the annexation of the Philippines and the competition of Asiatic labor, would do well to read the masterly paper in *The Forum* for March from the pen of Ho Yow, Chinese Consul-General to the United States, on "Western Benefits Through China's Development." It is interesting to find this brilliant Oriental taking substantially the same ground as that taken in several articles printed on this page, notably one which appeared February 4th on "Oriental Competition with American Labor." He declares in substance, etc. * * * If you could put the United States on a turntable and twist it around until the Golden Gate opposed the English Channel and New York was before Hong Kong would San Francisco be benefited or damaged by its contiguity to Europe?" That question, put by the Chinese Consul-General, is apt to be a poser to those who imagine that a sleepy, inactive population facing us across the Pacific is a safer thing for American interests than will be a roused, eager, aspiring population. In point of fact, as the *Pioneer Press* has heretofore pointed out in other words, if we can fill the Orient with an European hunger even the marvelous development of American industries witnessed in the last fifty years will have to be surpassed to meet that hunger's demand.—*St. Paul Pioneer Press.*

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